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CLAIMS

1. In a video decoder system for receiving program  
guide information from a first source, a method for collating  
5 program guide information, comprising the steps of:

- a) displaying a selectable program guide menu icon;
- b) collating a category of program guide information  
items from said first source by a display attribute in response to  
selection of said menu icon, said display attribute being allocated  
10 to said category of program guide information items and said  
display attribute being common to both said category and to said  
menu icon; and
- c) displaying said collated program guide information  
items.

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2. A method according to claim 1, wherein  
said display attribute represents at least one of a)  
color, b) shading, and c) geometry.

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3. A method according to claim 1 wherein, in said  
collating step  
said category of program guide information items  
includes items associated with at least one of a) a particular  
source, b) a particular function and c) particular program content.

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4. A method according to claim 3 wherein, in said  
collating step  
said function category includes items associated with  
at least one of a) Email, b) fax, c) telephone and d) video phone.

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5. A method according to claim 3 wherein, in said collating step

said content category includes items associated with at least one of a) program theme and b) program topic.

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6. A method according to claim 1 further including the steps of

allocating a plurality of display attributes to a corresponding plurality of categories of program guide information items, and

hierarchically collating said categories of program guide information items.

7. A method according to claim 1 further including the steps of

receiving program guide information from a second source;

allocating a display attribute to a category of program guide information items from said first source and said second source; and

collating said category of program guide information items from said first source and said second source by said display attribute in response to selection of said menu icon.

8. A method according to claim 1 further including the step of

forming program map information for associating said display attribute with programs listed in said program guide items.

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9. A method according to claim 1 further including the step of

forming program map information for associating said display attribute with said displayed program guide menu icon.

10. In a video decoder system for receiving program guide information from a first source and a second source, a method for collating program guide information from a plurality of sources, comprising the steps of:

- a) allocating a new data identifier to a program guide information item from said second source;
- b) forming composite program map information associating said new data identifier with a program listed in said program guide item from said second source;
- c) retrieving said second source program guide item from memory using said new data identifier; and
- d) displaying said second source program guide item.

11. A method according to claim 10, further including the step of

removing duplicated and redundant program guide information items prior to said allocating step.

12. A method according to claim 10, further including the step of

forming composite program map information associating a first code identifying a first program category with data identifiers of a plurality of program guide items.

13. A method according to claim 12, further including the step of

using said first code for identifying program guide information items associated with at least one of, a) a particular source, b) a particular function and c) particular program content.

14. A method according to claim 12, further including the step of

forming composite program map information associating a second code identifying a second program category with data identifiers of a second plurality of program guide items.

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15. A method according to claim 14, further including the step of

hierarchically sorting said program guide information items by category using said first code and said second code.

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16. A method according to claim 15, wherein said first and second categories correspond to program theme and topic respectively.

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17. In a video decoder system for receiving program guide information from a first source containing a first code identifying a program category, a method for collating program guide information from a plurality of sources, comprising the steps of:

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a) converting said first code to a second code in accordance with equivalence mapping information for allocating a category in a master set of program categories to said received program category;

b) sorting and merging program guide information from said first source and a second source according to said master set of program categories; and

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c) displaying said sorted and merged program guide information.

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18. A method according to claim 17, further including the step of

receiving said equivalence mapping information.

19. A method according to claim 17, further including the step of

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retrieving said equivalence mapping information from said program guide information from said first source.

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